

**Committee for a Better Environment
Davis Hall, College Park
December 8, 2014
6:30 PM**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Suchitra Balachandran	X	
Gemma Evans	X	
Janis Oppelt		X
Kennis Termini	X	
Donna Weene	X	

Guests Present: Councilman Alan Hew; Steve Beavers, City Liaison; Matt Dernoga; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

1. Review and approval 10/27/14 meeting minutes

Ms. Evans called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Ms. Balachandran made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the October 27, 2014 meeting. Ms. Termini seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

2. Financial Report

Mr. Beavers stated that there are no changes to the Financial Report. No expenditures were disbursed. There is about \$6,000 in the budget for the current fiscal year.

3. Ongoing Business

a. Canning & Preserving

There will be 18 people at the Parish House on March 21, 2015, from 8:30am-12:30pm, canning and preserving orange marmalade. The request was made for \$250 to cover a stipend, snack food and supplies. Ms. Weene made the motion to spend \$250 for the Canning and Preserving event. Ms. Termini seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

b. Birding Workshop

Ms. Oppelt sent an email stating there is a workshop with College Park Arts Exchange. If anyone is interested, she would obtain further information.

c. Baywise

This is a workshop aimed at the health of your backyard – native plants, water management, wild life habitat, pollinators, pesticides. Here is the website to review the information about Baywise: <http://extension.umd.edu/baywise>. Ms. Evans also stated that a

student, who lives in College Park Woods, developed a rain garden. It was suggested that he receive a Green Award. Ms. Evans will pursue further information about the student.

d. Recycling

The grant and awards went before City Council and were approved for the two hotels. It seems that the grant may re-open in January 2015. The committee discussed the idea of putting the money back into the City budget to use towards something more constructive. Business recycling, even with the grant money available, does not seem to be taking off on a positive note even with direct promotion, grant monies, face to face meetings, etc. Recycling has been mandatory by Prince Georges County since July 1, 2014. Ms. Evans and Ms. Balachandran will be writing up a proposal on business recycling, including a list of options with pros and cons and asking for the grant monies to be used for temporary recycling dumpsters in various spots throughout the City. They will also ask Lorie and Bob to review prior to sending to City Council.

4. New Business

- a. Waste Zero.** Kristin Brown's company that manufacturer's colored plastic bags and is used for trash collection for a "pay as you throw" program. This presentation was made to Andy and Bob on Friday morning and both are willing to use in College Park. You pay based on the amount you throw away, similar to electricity use. The more electric you use, you have a higher bill and the less electricity you bill, you have a lower bill. The trash program works the same way. There are approximately 7000 communities in the US that use this program. In Maryland, on the town of Aberdeen uses this program and has been doing so for about 20 years.

The company offers three bag sizes for sale: 8 gallon, 13 gallon, and 35 gallon. They are distributed to various grocery and retail stores for sale. There is a specific schedule of what color bag gets picked up on what day of the week and this is monitored by the company collecting the trash.

The company states that College Park averages 4000 tons of trash per year at \$59 per ton. Using the Waste Zero program will reduce that to 1800 tons of trash per year and will save the City about \$100K per year. From the difference, about 732 tons per year are now recycled and the City will receive monies for the recycling effort. There is also about 25% of the trash that could be composted resulting in more trash reduction.

The committee would like to speak with someone in Aberdeen who has been working with the program to give more insight and guidance. They would also like to see information about the program on cities that are comparable in size to College Park. Ms. Evans stated she would speak to our new intern, Jeremy, and ask him to work on this phase of the project. Ms. Balachandran also stated she would put together the various questions raised by the group and share in an email and these questions would also be used by Jeremy to gather information.

- b. Loose plastic bags.** There was an email going around the North College Park list serve that the City will no longer taking single plastic bags in the recycling bins. This is not official yet. Plastic bags are supposed to be bundled together and not loose as

they gum up the machines. If this goes into effect, a notice will be sent to all residents that plastic bags will need to be taken to the grocery stores for recycling.

- c. **Intern.** Denise's intern, Jeremy, is interested in sustainability issues and would like to work with the CBE. He has contacted both Mr. Beavers and Ms. Balachandran.
- d. **Little Paint Branch stream.** The University of Maryland student environmental group has approached Councilmember Hew to seek help in cleaning up the stream. They have raised about \$200K and think they will need \$400K total. Ms. Evans stated that without more specific information, the committee cannot commit to this project. Councilmember Hew stated he would keep the CBE apprised as he receives more information.
- e. **Tree Removal policy.** Ms. Evans would like to work with the Tree and Landscape Committee on creating a policy for removal of trees. This request comes from the demolition of the property at Edgewood and Route 1 where many trees were removed. She will attend their December meeting and broach the idea with them.

5. Next meeting date – 1/26/15

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, January 26, 2014 at 7:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary